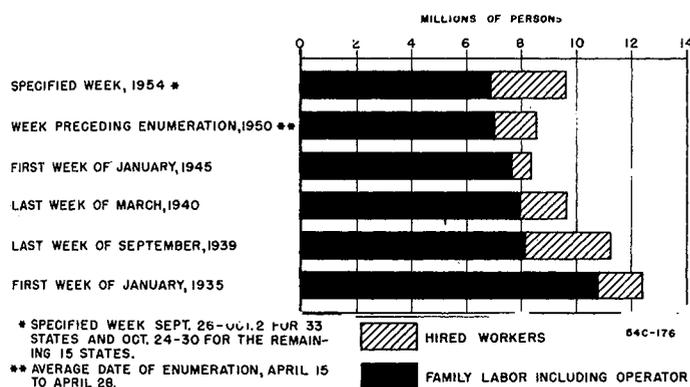


For the specified week preceding the enumeration in September or October, 1954, there were 9,597,343 persons reported as working on farms in the United States according to the Census of Agriculture. Of this number, 4,142,352 were operators, 2,725,341 were unpaid members of the operator's family, and 2,729,650 were hired workers. The heaviest concentration of hired workers was in the New England, the Middle Atlantic, and the North Central States and in a few of the more intensive agricultural producing areas in the States of Florida, California, and Washington. Of the total family workers, 39.7 percent were unpaid members of the operator's family.

Because of the lack of comparability of the data on numbers of workers for different Census years, the trend in the number of farm workers cannot be determined with full accuracy. Analysis of the data for the five Census years indicates the trend toward fewer workers, both family and hired, on farms.

FARM LABOR—NUMBER OF PERSONS WORKING DURING SPECIFIED PERIODS, FOR THE UNITED STATES: 1935 TO 1954



Operators working.—A separate count of farm operators who were included as workers is available only for the 1954, 1950, and 1945 Censuses. Only one person per farm was to be counted as a farm operator. In the case of a partnership, the active or senior partner was to be considered the operator. Members of a partnership, other than the active or senior partner, working during the specified week, were to be counted as unpaid family workers.

In 1954 and 1950, operators working 1 or more hours during the specified week were included, while in 1945 only operators working 2 or more days during the specified week were included. In 1940, the data relate to farm operators working the equivalent of 2 or more days of work for the specified week. For 1940 and 1935, farm operators were not shown separately from other family workers.

Unpaid members of operator's family working.—Data for unpaid members of the operator's family reported as working during the specified week refer to those working 15 or more hours in 1954 and in 1950 and 2 or more days in 1945. There was no limitation in regard to age of unpaid member of the operator's family working in 1954 and 1950; while in 1945, only workers 14 years old and over were to be included. The week for which workers were reported was September 26-October 2 for 33 States in 1954 and October 24-30 for the remaining 15 States; for 1950, the week was the week preceding the enumeration and for 1945, it was the first week in January.

Hired labor.—Detailed information about hired farm workers was obtained in the 1954 Census. The inquiries on the questionnaire provided for obtaining: (a) the total number of hired workers employed during the specified week preceding the enumeration; (b) the number of hired workers by the period of expected employment during 1954 (150 days or more or less than 150 days); (c) the number of hired workers by basis of payment; and (d) the hours worked and the wages paid.

Regular and seasonal workers.—Hired workers on the farm during the specified week preceding the enumeration were classified in 1954 as "regular" workers if the period of expected employment was 150 or more days and as "seasonal" workers if the period of expected employment was less than 150 days. For the few reports for which the period of expected employment was not indicated, and for other reports on which only the basis of payment was indicated, workers were classified during office processing as regular or seasonal, taking into account the type of farm, the wage rates, the approximate seasonal labor requirements for operating the farm, and the expenditure for hired labor.

Of the farms reporting hired workers the specified week preceding the enumeration in 1954, 32.9 percent reported regular workers but no seasonal workers, 55.7 percent reported seasonal but no regular workers, while only 11.4 percent reported both regular and seasonal workers. Of the total number of hired workers reported for 1954, 25.3 percent were classified as regular and 74.7 percent were classified as seasonal workers. The proportion of hired workers classified as either regular or seasonal shows a wide variation among the States. In Nevada, Wyoming and Montana, the proportion of all hired workers that were classified as regular were 60.2, 58.3 and 47.7 percent respectively. In contrast, in Arkansas, the proportion was only 10.1; in Maine, 10.9, and in Tennessee, 11.6 percent. In general, the proportion of regular workers are highest in the areas where livestock production is important.

Basis of payment.—The 1954 and the 1950 Questionnaires provided for obtaining the number of hired workers who were paid cash wages on a monthly basis, on a weekly basis, on a daily basis, on an hourly basis, and on a piece-work basis. In 1954, when the basis of payment was not indicated, the missing information was supplied on the basis of a review of the characteristics of the farm and on the basis of reports for other farms of a similar type. In processing the questionnaire for 1950, no attempt was made to supply the missing information for basis of payment. For 1950, separate totals are shown for workers for whom the basis of payment was not reported.

In the 1954 Census for the United States, 11.6 percent of all hired workers were reported as being paid cash wages on a monthly basis, 7.2 percent on a weekly basis, 19.9 percent on a daily basis, 22.6 percent on an hourly basis, and 38.8 percent on a piece-work basis. Wide variations existed among the States in the proportion of workers reported for each basis of payment.

For 1940, the inquiries on hired labor called for the number of workers for each of three classifications, as follows: (1) labor hired by the month; (2) labor hired by the day or week; and (3) other (including piece-work and contract labor). Because of differences in the wording of the inquiries, the data for 1940 are not entirely comparable with those for 1950 and 1954.

Wage rates.—For 1954, for each basis of payment, except for workers hired on an hourly and on a piecework basis, the questionnaire called for the cash rate of pay and the hours that the hired persons were expected to work to earn the reported rate. For workers hired on an hourly basis, the questionnaire called for the cash rate of pay. If there were 2 or more workers hired on the same basis of payment, the average rate of pay per person was to be reported.

For 1954, the data on cash wage rates and hours worked for workers for each basis of payment include those for whom both the wage rates and the hours worked were reported as well as those for whom either or both the wage rates and hours worked were supplied during the office processing.

The wage rates and hours worked reflect widely varying types of workers and working arrangements. Some workers